

Leicester, Mass^{tts} Sept. 19. 1865.

Dear friend Webb,

Your last letter (Aug. 23^d & 25th; rec^d. Sept 6th.) was the first one I ever had from you which I was not glad to get & to read. The tidings of your ill-health are ^{as painful to me} as unexpected, and I was totally unprepared for anything of the kind. I found, from reading yrs. to Mr. Tuli^t enclosed, as you gave me leave to do, that you could find a probable cause in over-exertion, working all night, &c. in some recent election. So I trust it will prove to be nothing organic, but only a temporary affection which care, suitable treatment (and your own good sense is worth at least as much as the opinion of any doctor ^{as to the treatment needed}), & abstinence from much labor & especially mental labor, may quite remove. I have had some experience in this very line. The foundation of most of my physical ailments of the last 4 years was laid in my over-tasking my brain, & my whole nervous & physical system at once, in some continuous weeks' Anti-slavery lecturing, which I undertook to combine with, & add to, my usual work of organizing & laying out the work of numbers of others. It brought on, first, violent bleeding at the nose, repeating itself so often & so copiously as to drive me back to Boston. There soon succeeded to that a very irregular action of the heart, attended with a good deal of pain, at times, ~~or worse~~. This compelled me to suspend labor entirely for some weeks, - during which my only medical treatment was homœopathic; - but the great thing was the quiet both of mind & body which I strictly observed for 2 or 3 weeks, & my abstinence from all extra & unusual work during that coming winter. But for many years after, I was subject to pains & throbbings at the heart, nor is my circulation of blood regular or ~~any~~ normal to this day. Still I am very greatly improved in all those respects; and I trust you may be, as I think you may. I would (if I may advise) neither go into a stirring course of Baths, tho' of tepid Sitz baths ~~in~~ in moderation I sh^d. speak well in your case, nor would I rush into a stimulating diet beyond your want.

I trust soon to hear a more favorable account of your health. And, as soon as you are decidedly released, & able to walk about pretty well, why not break away from business, & ship over here to America, see your brethren here pass some leisurely months amongst us, your mind being on new scenes & topics to some extent? If sensible physicians do not recommend that, I would not urge it. But if strike me, if you can be decidedly relied in regard to existing symptoms, & able to bear well the transit, it would be a very right thing for you to do. Think of it. So far as I can foresee, I am likely to be more at liberty to give time to you, than at any period for many years back. — The drowning of your young friend Harvey was extremely sad, heart-rending, it must have been indeed, to his friends. What a dreadful interruption to a pleasure-party of friends. — I have written to Mr. Sulist as you requested & given him such hints & references as occurred to me, & offered to assist him in any way in my power. I think such a work as he & Mr. Garfield speak of, prepared carefully, philosophically, & with evident fairness, would arrest attention and do good. The works (few enough) already in existence are either too eulogistic of the Negro Race, or too plainly hostile — in either case, partial & one-sided. Wm Wells Brown's little volume, "The Black Man, his Antecedents, Genius, & Achievements", is quite a sensible & useful book for ordinary purposes & popular reading. — Almost at the same time with your last, came a letter to me from another Richard Webb, & from the other side of the world, — being one from yr. son R. written at Austin, August 7th. I intend to reply to it soon. He writes in good spirits; said he had that day rec^d. a letter from you (of June 10th), in wh. you speak of having written to me respecting a work on Metallurgy & Assaying for him. He requests me to do nothing about it, for reasons wh. he gives, —

Chiefly that, for the present, he has given up the idea of
sparing. Besides, he says, that works, better adapted to the
State of the art there, can be more readily & surely had in
San Francisco, than with us. He enjoys "that greatest
of blessings, health" & feels that he has laid a good foundation
of business-experience in regard to the future, but still feels
himself very much out of the world in that mountain
region. He keeps up some acquaintance with anti-
Slavery affairs, & "feels very well satisfied with the result
of the War, though he never approved of the War itself."

- I will endeavour, on my next visit to Boston, to make
inquiry for the young man you speak of, William Forbes.

My family are now in pretty good health, - my youngest
son (just upon 21) is the poorest off, in that respect. As I
believe I ^{have} told you, he contracted the seeds of Fever & Ague in
his campaigning on the banks of the Potomac in 1864 (just a year ago)
& has had a severe attack of it early this summer, wh. reduced
him severely. By the use of a specific much in vogue here
for that complaint, called "East India Chologogue" he was
enabled to subdue & break it down for the time; and on the
7th of August returned to his business in Boston, much to our
disliking. He has got along pretty well ^{however} to this time, considering the
extreme heat of the weather nearly all the time, but is by no means
well. He is a conscientious lad, thoroughly desirous to do his best
in the department of work entrusted to his supervision & care,
& never refusing onerous labor. But I dread to have him
follow up his business so closely as he does, & hope I may get
him a short respite from it this autumn. - My older son, Edw.,
is still at Washington, doing duty in one of the Bureaus of the
Navy Department, his stay there having been protracted very
far beyond his expectation when he went ~~thither~~ a year or more
ago. He keeps well & busy. He came home for a few days last
Nov. & has ~~since~~ ^{not} left Wash. since, (save 2 small journeys in the
service of the Dept.). We are now expecting to have him with
us for a few ~~days~~ ^{weeks}, soon. - While I am on the
subject of health, &c, I may speak of Garrison's, which is but

& deorable, yet he is projecting a tour of lecturing for the fall, in ansⁿ to sundry invitations he has had. He is constantly kept anxious by the poor health of Mrs. G., who remains quite helpless, & yet, owing to a course of electrical treatment she has had this summer, thought to be somewhat improved as to her general symptoms. His only daughter, Fanny, is expecting to be soon married to a gentleman of German parentage, but (I believe) mainly of American education, named Villard - some time known to young Wendell Garrison, who, I understand, much likes him. Wendell G. is also soon to marry Lucy McKim. - Edmund Quincy is very well. He lately made us a visit (at our house in Leicester) - as he did once before, some 4 years ago; - he is capital company, & we much enjoyed his very short stay. We ~~have~~ also had a visit from my Cousin S. J. May - he & Mr. Quincy were with us together, for one day. - The "Liberator" is bound to cease with the year. I wish Garrison might become connected with some journal of "progress" and high moral criticism & culture, & himself conduct & inspire it, - and that he could be so situated, as to family anxieties & cares, as to devote his time to it. But this is, I judge, wholly out of the question. His 35 yrs of journalizing have satisfied him, I think, with that kind of work. But for what other earthly business is he suited? To what other, at his age, can he address himself? I still wish, tho' I see no prospect of it, that he might be Editor-in-chief to some truly religious & ethical paper. - We increasingly like "The Nation" & expect much good from it. It is very able, not quite trenchant enough to suit me, & hardly seems as yet to have elbowed itself a clear place in the crowd. Evidently taking the London "Spectator" as its general model, for arrangement, manner, style, &c. it has some strong American features which will soon, I trust, ~~undoubtedly~~ predominate & infuse themselves everywhere in its pages. Its Southern Correspondence I think very valuable. - I hope, yet, you will be able to get ^(without trouble) for me the name of the author of "The Gentle Life"? Is it man or woman? I have suspected the latter. Men are ^{enough} sufficiently fools for it, but not just such mawkish, lisping, sentimental fools, I should say. - I was greatly obliged to Mary Estlin for sending me Mr. Bishop's note to her.

Boston, Sept. 22. I have written the most of this page in Balton, - having concluded to detain my letter 3 days, & so send you word of your friend W. H. Forbes. I have seen him to-day. He is not quite well, having been pretty sharply attacked with Sciatica about 3 months ago, & not really well since. - He has clearly overworked himself. He is doing a great business for a young man. He took me over his press where he has about a dozen lithographic printing presses at work, & doing it beautifully.